

On Thursday, September 19, 2013 at 7:00 pm a regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order. Roll Call. Present: Chair Eric Larson, Rick Andersen, Karen Chevalier, Mike Mellott, and Steve Munson. Absent: Bob Conklin and Rene Morris

Also present were Planner Dustin Wolff, City Attorney Ron Coplan, City Manager Scott Shumard, Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

Steve Munson made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 20, 2013 meeting; seconded by Karen Chevalier. Voting: Ayes – Andersen, Chevalier, Mellott, Munson, and Chair Larson. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Superintendent Schmidt reported the Council passed the R-3 Special Use for Good Neighbor Care to construct an addition for a memory care unit and Reins Street was vacated contingent on a site plan and development agreement being presented to City staff.

Chair Larson opened the floor to Sterling Commons Development, Inc. for their request to amend Section 102-263 and Table B of the sign code. Marvin Keys with Sterling Commons explained they have a lease with Verizon for a corner unit. Verizon has requested a sign on two façades although it is not a street intersection. Sterling code limits signage to the street frontage. Verizon will terminate the contract if they are not permitted to have an additional sign. Sterling Commons has submitted this request to permit Verizon a second sign and for larger retails in the future. The request is not seeking more signage, just different locations. This will help sell development.

Planner Wolff explained the sign code is a sensitive subject after the Plan Commission worked on the sign code for 15 months. It was a total rewrite because permitted signs were too excessive. The community deserves to look good. Wolff reported the sign code has been working well and staff is not supportive of this change. Wolff noted he had attached several photos of Verizon stores that did not have two signs, even on corner units. Sterling code is not dissimilar to other communities. Wolff is not in favor of tweaking the code for one business. A change in the code causes ramifications throughout.

Superintendent Schmidt admitted that she was not involved in the sign code process but it provides consistency. The sign code works well.

Planner Wolff explained that the Plan Commission worked on the sign code with Alderman Cox and Turnroth Signs, as well as several business owners for 18 months.

Marvin Keys did not believe that the signage code is working well because they are having difficulty getting businesses here. When communities are on the bubble retail asks for more. Sterling Commons is using the tools they need to get business to Sterling. This is the only community where two signs are not allowed on a corner unit.

Alderman Stauter reported the Plan Commission held extensive discussions on signage. If we permit two signs, how will that affect the downtown? We have to take a stand somewhere. We will be in for more changes.

Mike Mellott stated the purpose of the sign code is to look at the community as a whole. One building is not a problem aesthetically but revamping the code causes problems.

Steve Munson prefers uniformity throughout the code and community. The purpose of the sign code is provide uniformity and aesthetic guidelines. Munson stands behind the work of the Plan Commission on the sign code.

Mike Mellott made a motion to recommend to the City Council denial of the petition from Sterling Commons to amend Section 102-263 and Table B of the sign code to permit signage on two building facades; seconded by Steve Munson. Voting: Ayes – Anderson, Chevalier, Mellott, Munson and Chair Larson. Nays – None. Motion carried.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Marie Rombouts  
City Clerk